



KASANE

7

d a r u m a
m a t s u u r a

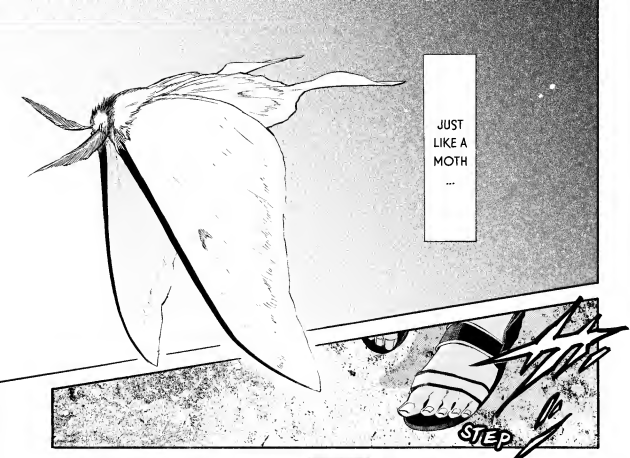


KASANE

7

d a r u m a
m a t s u u r a

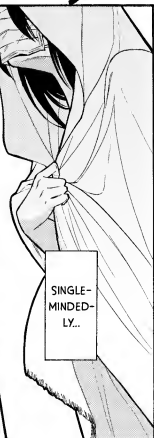
Chapter Fifty-Four:	Bug Zapper	3
Chapter Fifty-Five:	Gnawing At Each Other	23
Chapter Fifty-Six:	<i>Kasaneru</i>	43
Chapter Fifty-Seven:	Fire and a Seal	63
Chapter Fifty-Eight:	Rainbow	83
Chapter Fifty-Nine:	Bloom	103
Chapter Sixty:	The Woman Named Saki	123
Chapter Sixty-One:	Burnt Skin	145
Chapter Sixty-Two:	Hues	165



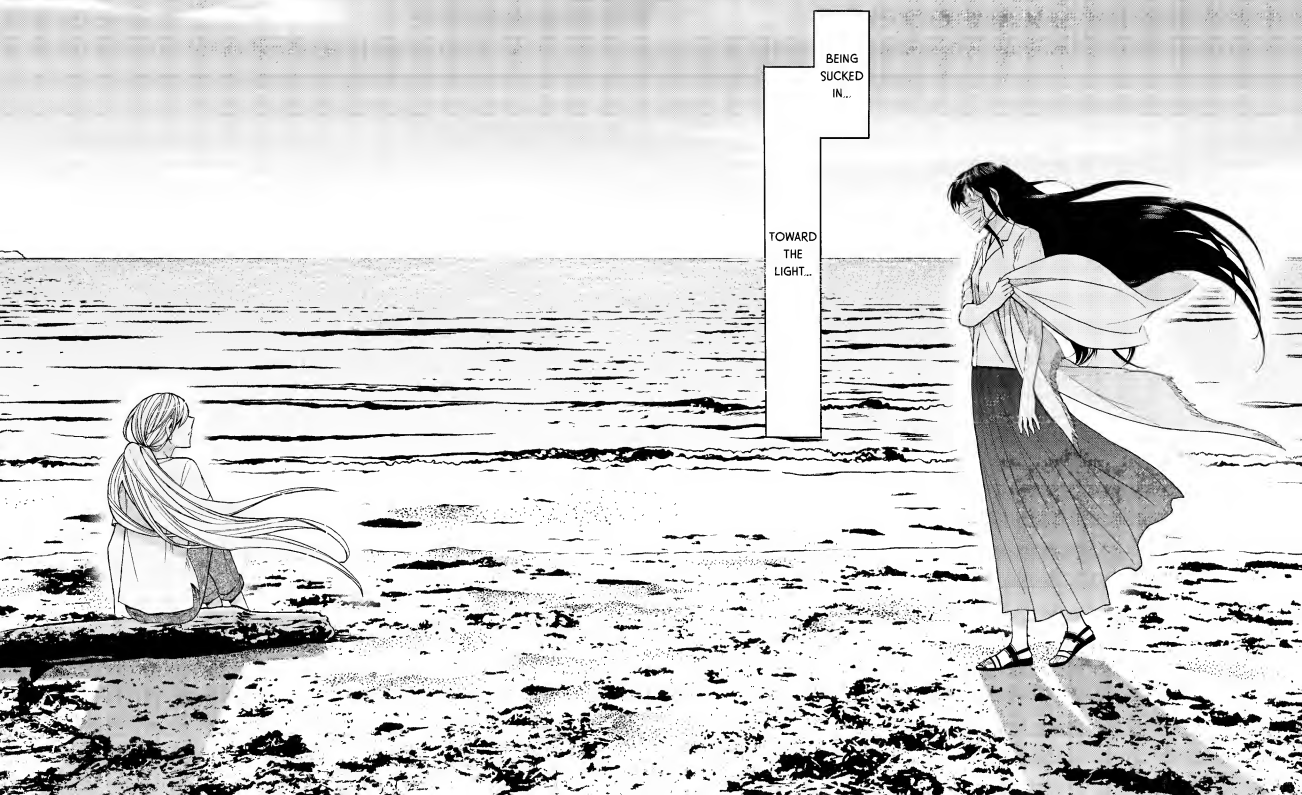
JUST
LIKE A
MOTH
...



SO
SINGLE-
MINDED-
LY...



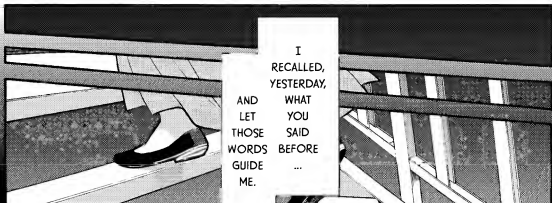
SINGLE-
MINDED-
LY...





I JUST
LET THE
URGE
GUIDE
ME.

I CAME
WITHOUT
EVEN
THINKING.



I
RECALLED,
YESTERDAY,
AND LET
THOSE
WORDS
GUIDE
ME.

WHAT
YOU
SAID
BEFORE
...



I GOT
THAT
CALL
FROM
YOU...

BZZ

I'M
PRETTY
SURE
THE LAST
TIME I
TALKED TO
HER...

WAS
THE
DAY
AFTER
NEENA
DIED.

NOGIKU.

I JUST
KIND OF
WANTED
TO HEAR
YOUR
VOICE.

NEENA
...

SORRY
THIS
IS OUT
OF THE
BLUE.

NOGIKU
?



YEAH
...

I'M A
LITTLE
TIRED.

WHAT'S
WRONG?
YOU
DON'T
SOUND
GREAT.



AND HERE
I WAS,
THINKING
I WANTED
TO HEAR
YOUR
VOICE.

I
THOUGHT
FOR SURE
I'D NEVER
HEAR IT
AGAIN.



AND
RUN
SOME-
WHERE
FAR
AWAY.

IT'S
GETTING
SO BAD,
I WANT
TO
THROW
IT ALL
AWAY
...

THINGS
AREN'T
GOING
WELL...WITH
MY LIFE
OR MY
JOB.



IT'S
ALL
RIGHT.

OH...
I'M
SORRY.

I'M
JUST
COMPLAIN-
ING...



YOU'RE
REALLY
THE ONLY
TRUST-
WORTHY
FRIEND
I HAVE.



THANK
YOU.

YOU'RE
ALWAYS
HELPING
ME OUT.



"FROM
NOW
ON"
...

SO
FROM
NOW ON,
IF THERE'S
ANYTHING
I CAN DO
FOR YOU
INSTEAD,
TELL ME.

NEE-
NA,

LIS-
TEN...

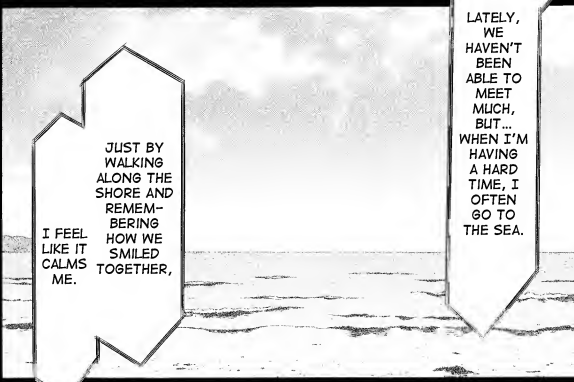


JUST
...

I DON'T
HAVE ANY
LOVERS...
OR
FAMILY.



YOU
KNOW,



LATELY,
WE
HAVEN'T
BEEN
ABLE TO
MEET
MUCH,
BUT...
WHEN I'M
HAVING
A HARD
TIME, I
OFTEN
GO TO
THE SEA.

JUST BY
WALKING
ALONG THE
SHORE AND
REMEM-
BERING
HOW WE
SMILED
TOGETHER,
I FEEL
LIKE IT
CALMS
ME.



I CHOSE
NOT TO
HOLD
ONTO HER
NUMBER
OR
EMAIL...
AND
DE-
STROYED
MY
PHONE.



SINCE THE
REPORTS
OF NEENA
TANZAWA'S
DISAP-
PEARANCE
WENT ON
THE NEWS,
I HAVEN'T
CON-
TACTED
HER, OF
COURSE.

THE
SEA
...

JUST
ONE
PATH...

WAS
PRE-
SENTED
TO ME.

OUR
CON-
NEC-
TION
WAS
SO
TENU-
OUS...

BUT...

I
AVOIDED
GETTING
TOO
NOSY...

TO AVOID
ANY
QUESTIONS
ABOUT
MYSELF.

I
DON'T
KNOW
ANY-
THING
ABOUT
HER
...
NOT
WHERE
SHE
LIVES,
OR
HER
JOB.



I JUST LET
MYSELF
BE DRAWN
THERE.

I
COULDN'T
EVEN
THINK
ABOUT
IT.

WHAT
COULD I
EVEN DO,
MEETING
HER WITH
MY UGLY
FACE?

I
WASN'T
CALM
ABOUT
IT.

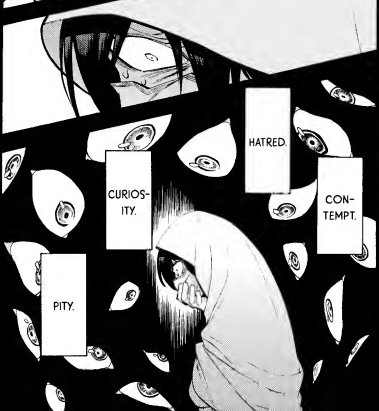




ALL
I TOOK
WITH ME
WAS MY
OWN MIND,
HAZY FROM
LACK OF
SLEEP..



AS
I LEFT
THAT
MORN-
ING.



PITY.

CURIOS-
ITY.

HATRED.

CON-
TEMPT.



LOOKED
AT SOME-
ONE LIKE
THAT.



AT
SOME
POINT,

I,
TOO
...



THAT'S
RIGHT.

THAT'S
WHEN I
KNEW.



IT'S THE
MOST
NATURAL
AND
UBIQUITOUS
DISCRIMINA-
TION
OF ALL.

BUT
NOGIKU,

ARE
BUILT
INTO
PEOPLE
ON AN INSTINC-
TUAL
LEVEL.

THE
DESIRE
TO LOOK
DOWN ON
THOSE
INFERIOR
...

AND
THE
SENSE OF
SUPERIOR-
ITY THAT
COMES
WITH IT...

MAYBE
...

YOU
MIGHT
...



IS MY
LONGING
FOR
YOU...



OR
IS
IT...

AS A
FRIEND?



AND
I STILL
HAVEN'T
CONSIDERED
WHAT I
WOULD
DO IF
WE DID.

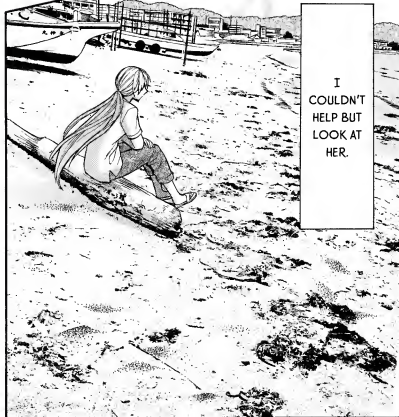
THERE'S
NO
GUARAN-
TEE I
CAN SEE
HER,

I'M NOT
EVEN SURE
MYSELF.

F-SHNN



BUT
STILL,
RIGHT
NOW
...



I
COULDN'T
HELP BUT
LOOK AT
HER.



NO
WAY...
SHE'S
REALLY
...



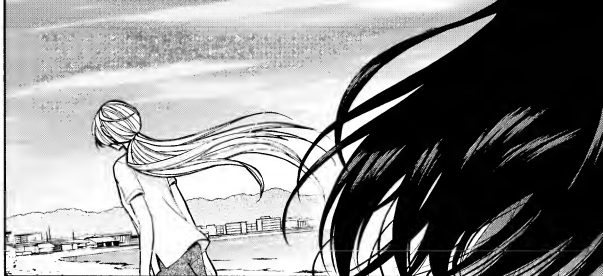
HER FACE
WAS EVEN
MORE
BEAUTIFUL
THAN
BEFORE.



YOU
SEEMED
A LOT
LIKE...

SOME-
ONE WHO
WAS VERY
IMPORTANT
TO ME.

PARDON
ME.



EVEN IF I
WANTED TO
CALL OUT
TO HER...



AH
...



PLEASE
...

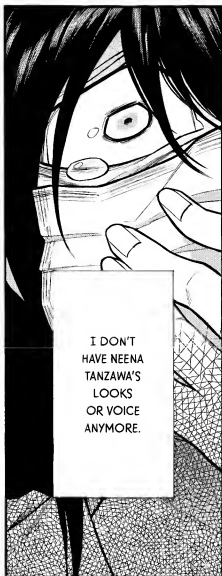


WAIT
...

DON'T
GO,



BUT...



I DON'T
HAVE NEENA
TANZAWA'S
LOOKS
OR VOICE
ANYMORE.



IN
ACTUAL-
ITY,

IT'S ALL
WORTHLESS

IT'S
ALL
FOOL-
ISH.

THE
BEAUTIFUL
WAVELETS,

THE
BEAUTIFUL
LIGHT OF
THE SUN,

THE
BEAUTIFUL...
MEMORIES.

WE'RE
JUST TWO
DARK,
DIRTY
BEASTS...

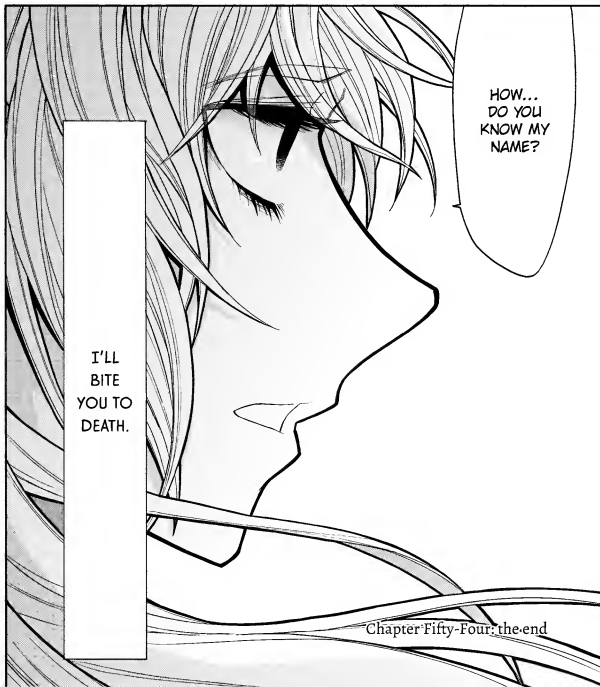
FACING
EACH OTHER
DOWN AT
THE GATES
OF HELL.





COME
CLOSER.

COME
ON.



I'LL
BITE
YOU TO
DEATH.

HOW...
DO YOU
KNOW MY
NAME?

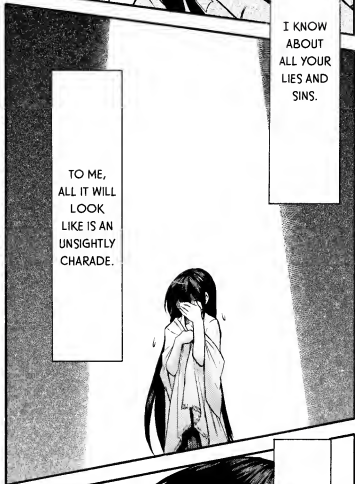


Chapter Fifty-Five: Gnawing At Each Other



I-
I...

I KNOW
ABOUT
ALL YOUR
LIES AND
SINS.



TO ME,
ALL IT WILL
LOOK
LIKE IS AN
UNSIGHTLY
CHARADE.



H...

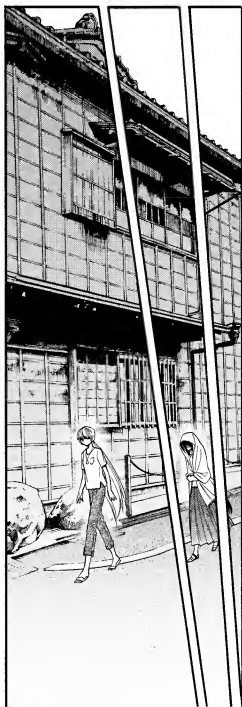
HEARD
FROM
NEENA
...

THE
TRUTH IS
ROCK-
SOLID.



WHATEVER
ACT YOU
TRY TO
PUT ON,





IF YOU
KNOW
ANYTHING
ABOUT
NEENA, I'D
LOVE TO
HEAR IT.

IF YOU
DON'T MIND,
WHY DON'T
WE GO TALK
SOMEPLACE
A LITTLE
QUIETER?





SO THAT'S
KASANE...

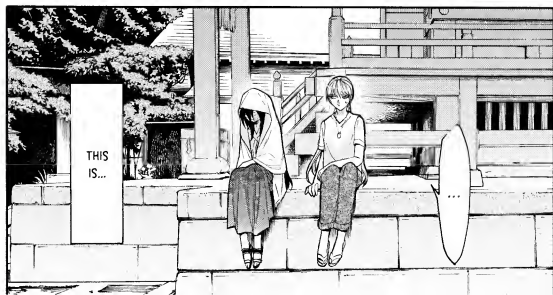
MY
OLDER
SISTER.

EVEN HER
PERSONALITY
IS ENTIRELY
DIFFERENT
FROM WHEN
SHE LOOKED
LIKE NEENA.

HUDDLING
OVER AND
COWERING...

THE NEENA
WHO WALKED
BY MY SIDE
DOWN THE
STREET...

REALLY
WAS AN
ILLUSION,
WASN'T
SHE?





AND
YOU
ARE?

L-LIKE
YOU AD-
DRESSED
ME
BEFORE,

I'M
NOGIKU.



...KA-
SANE.



...



THE SAME
PERSON
AS THE
BELOVED
ACTRESS
WHO
CHARMED
THE
MASSES?



HAVING
LOST NEENA
AND
EVERYTHING
ELSE...

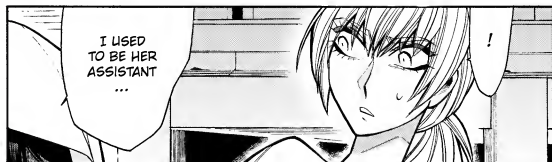
WAS
SHE LIKE
THIS IN
THE FIRST
PLACE?

NO,
PERHAPS
SHE'S
UPSET,



TALK TO
PEOPLE...
OR PUT ON A
PROPER ACT.

AND
SHE CAN'T
EVEN...





WHEN
SHE
TRIED
TO
STOP
ME,

I
PUSHED
HER
AWAY
...

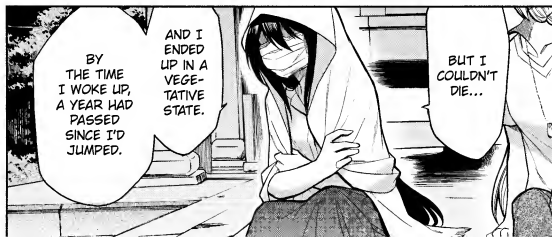


I WAS
TROUBLED
WITH SOME
PERSONAL
ISSUES...

AND I
JUMPED
OFF A
BUILDING.



WHAT
?



BY
THE TIME
I WOKE UP,
A YEAR HAD
PASSED
SINCE I'D
JUMPED.

AND I
ENDED
UP IN A
VEGE-
TATIVE
STATE.

BUT I
COULDN'T
DIE...



THAT FOR
THE WHOLE
YEAR I WAS
UNCONSCIOUS,
NEENA HAD
BEEN CARING
FOR ME ALL
THAT TIME!

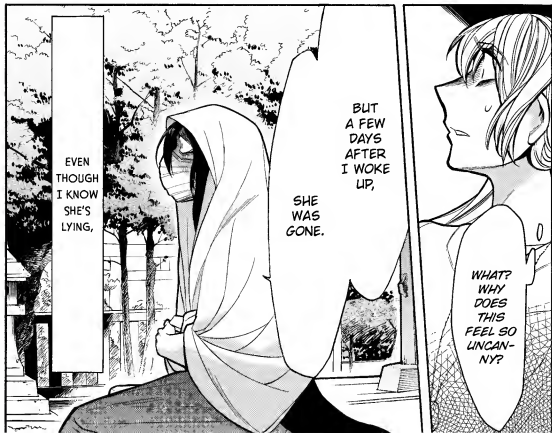
AND
THEN I
FOUND
OUT...



BUT EVEN
THOUGH I WAS
JUST HER
ASSISTANT...

AND MY
RELATIVES
ABANDONED
ME...

I HAVE
NO IM-
MEDIATE
FAMILY,



EVEN
THOUGH
I KNOW
SHE'S
LYING,

BUT
A FEW
DAYS
AFTER
I WOKE
UP,

SHE
WAS
GONE.

WHAT?
WHY
DOES
THIS
FEEL SO
UNCAN-
NY?

AND I'M
BEING
SUCKED
INTO HER
FICTION!

EVER
SINCE
THEN,
I'VE BEEN
...

LOOK-
ING
FOR
HER.

I
CAN'T
FALL
FOR
THIS.

SO...

SHIVER

SHE'S
FORC-
IBLY
TWIST-
ING THE
TRUTH...

JUST
WHAT ON
EARTH
IS SHE
DOING
NOW?



ONCE
I WOKE
UP.

SHE
SAID SHE
HAD A
WONDER-
FUL TIME
ON THAT
BEACH
...

WITH
A GIRL
NAMED
NOGIKU-
SAN...
AND THAT
EXPERIENCE
WAS VERY
IMPORTANT
TO HER.



NEENA
TOLD ME
ABOUT
YOU...

HOW
DID YOU
HEAR
ABOUT
ME?



SHE
TOLD
ME...

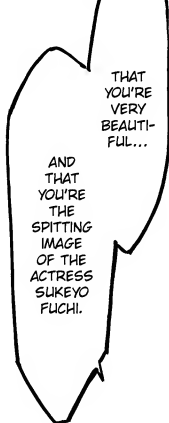
WE'VE
NEVER
EVEN MET,
BUT YOU
CALLED ME
NOGIKU
AFTER ONE
GLANCE.

I'M
IMPRESSED
YOU
RECOGNIZED
ME,
THOUGH.





...TCH.



THAT
YOU'RE
VERY
BEAUTI-
FUL...

AND
THAT
YOU'RE
THE
SPITTING
IMAGE
OF THE
ACTRESS
SUKEYO
FUCHI.



?

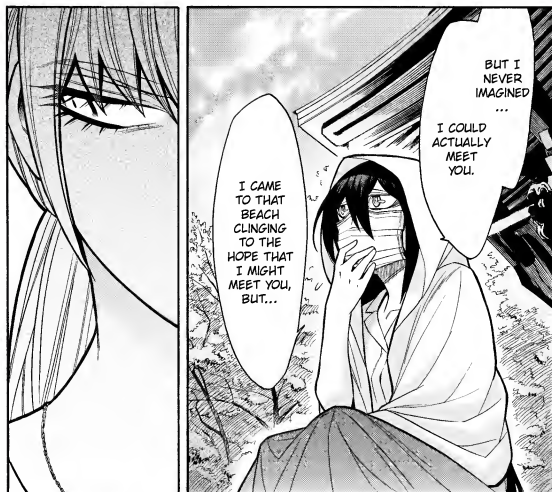


OFTEN
ENOUGH
TO DISLIKE
IT.

I'M
OFTEN
TOLD
THAT I
LOOK
LIKE
HER...

N-NO.

UM... DID
I OFFEND
YOU?



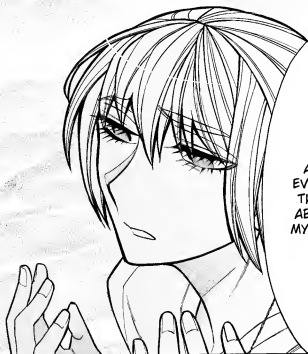


PAIN?



NEENA
SUPPORTED
ME.

SHE
WAS
THE
ONLY
ONE
...
WHO'D
EVER
TAKEN
ME TO A
PLACE
WITH NO
PAIN.

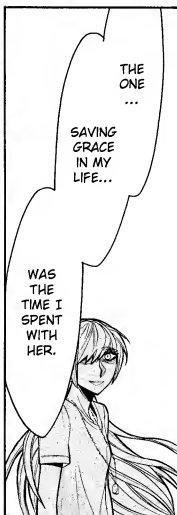


AND
EVERY-
THING
ABOUT
MYSELF.

YES...
I
HATE MY
ENVIRON-
MENT, MY
CIRCUM-
STANCES...
MY BODY
AND MY
FACE...

AND LIVE
AN ENTIRELY
DIFFERENT
LIFE.

I WISH
I COULD
THROW IT
ALL AWAY,
BECOME
SOMEONE
ELSE...







SEEING
MY
MOTH-
ER,
ALIVE.



HUH?

N-

NO!

WITH A
WOMAN
UGLY
ENOUGH
TO MAKE
YOU
AVERT
YOUR
EYES.

AND...
I THINK
IT'S
BETTER
IF YOU
DON'T
INVOLVE
YOUR-
SELF
AGAIN
...

I'LL
GO,
NOW.





INTO ONE
ANOTHER'S
FLESH.

WE
SANK
OUR
FANGS
...



BUT
WHY?

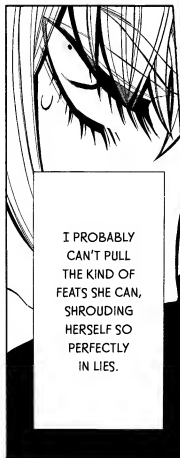


YES, I
WOULD
LIKE
TO...

IF IT
WERE
POSSIBLE.

Chapter Fifty-Six: *Kasaneru**

*KASANERU NORMALLY MEANS "TO OVERLAP," AND IS USED TO DESCRIBE KISSING. IN THIS CASE, IT'S WRITTEN WITH THE KANJI IN KASANE'S NAME, WHICH, BESIDES BEING A GIRL'S NAME, CAN ALSO MEAN "EVIL INFLUENCE."



I PROBABLY
CAN'T PULL
THE KIND OF
FEATS SHE CAN,
SHROUDING
HERSELF SO
PERFECTLY
IN LIES.

YOU
HAVE
SUCH A
BEAUTIFUL
FACE.



THERE'S
NEVER
BEEN
ANYTHING
GOOD
ABOUT IT.

BUT...



BUT
NONE
HAVE EVER
REALLY
TREATED
ME LIKE
A HUMAN
BEING.

MEN...
SEE MY FACE,
APPROACH ME,
CALL ME
BEAUTIFUL OR
PRETTY...



AND
ADD
SOME
LIES.

SOME-
ONE ONCE
CALLED ME
"DEFECTIVE
GOODS
WITH A
FALSE
VENEER"
...

BUT
I CAN
TAKE MY
REAL
FEEL-
INGS...

KEPT
PURSUING
ME, NO
MATTER
HOW I
AVOIDED
HIM.

I'VE
BEEN
STALKED...
AND
ATTACKED.

AND
ANOTHER
...



AND
FROM
MYSELF.

YEAH
...

I...
WANT
TO BE
FREED
FROM THE
PEOPLE
WHO
KNOW
ME,



"GO THE
PLACES
YOU WANT
TO GO."



AND
LIVE LIKE
I WANT
TO LIVE.



...



I KNEW
THAT YOU
WERE
REALLY
UNHAPPY...

BUT I
NEVER
IMAGINED

...

IT DEPENDS ON
HOW YOU USE IT.
I COULD...
I COULD MANAGE
HER BEAUTY BETTER!

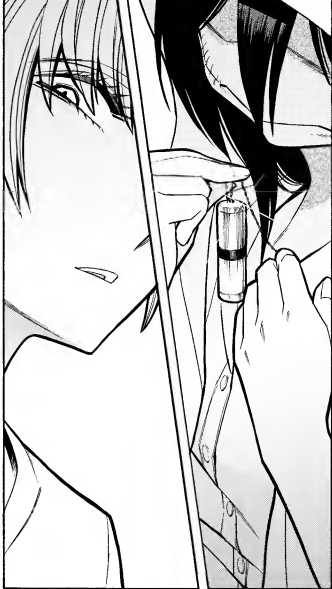
NO...

THAT
YOUR
UNHAP-
PINESS
WAS
CAUSED
BY YOUR
BEAUTY!

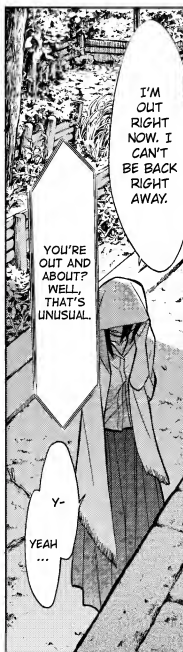


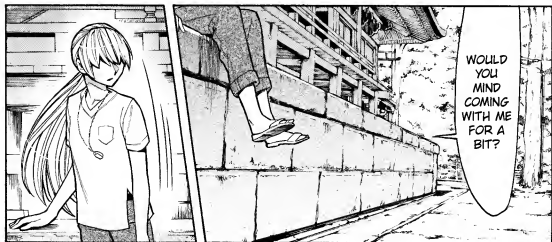
I COULD
PUSH THE
MISERY
AWAY...

AND INVITE
FORTUNE.











I'LL
TELL YOU
NEENA'S
SECRET.



BUT
EVEN
SO...



THIS INDE-
SCRIBABLE
ANXIETY...



COME
CLOS-
ER.



WHAT'S
WRONG?

N-
NOTH-
ING.



ISN'T
BECAUSE
OF HER.







...NO.

THE SAME
FATE MIGHT
SWALLOW
ME, TOO.

か
GRAB

TWITCH



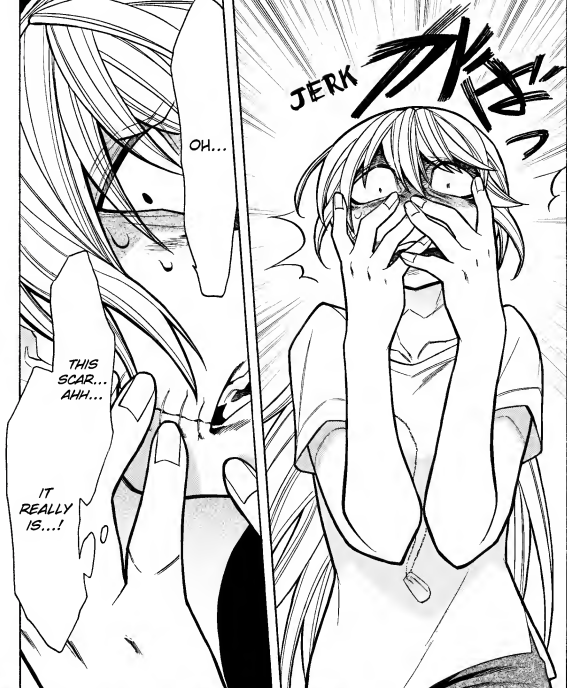
IS THAT
BY
WALK-
ING
DOWN
THE
SAME
PATH MY
MOTHER
DID,

MMM
NGH...

I WILL
BE THE
ONE...
SWAL-
LOWING
YOU
WHOLE!

I
WON'T
BE
SWAL-
LOWED
UP.





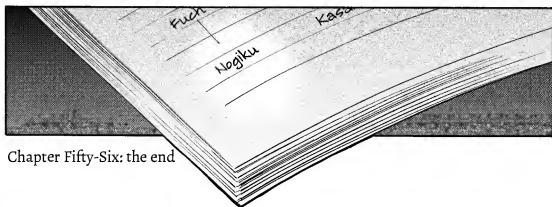


I CAN
SWITCH
US
BACK,
RIGHT
AWAY.

BUT
MORE
IMPOR-
TANTLY
...

I WANT
TO MAKE A
DEAL WITH
YOU...







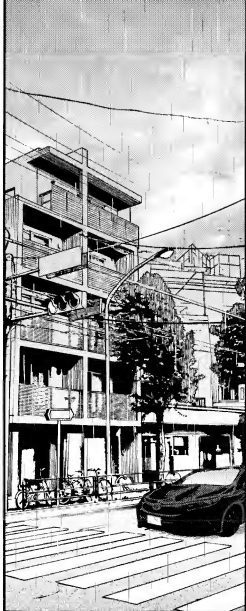
"THERE'S
SOMEONE
I'D LIKE
YOU TO
MEET."



THIS
TIME,
FOR
SURE.

A WOMAN
WHOSE
FACE SHE
CAN USE,

IF THAT
PERSON
IS...



I HAVE TO
CREATE A NEW
ACTRESS.

YES...

JUST
LIKE
HER.

ONE
BORN
FROM
FIRE,





IT
HAPPENED
IN...
A LONELY
MOUNTAIN
VILLAGE
NAMED
AKEIWA.

I FIRST
MET HER
AT THE
AGE OF
ELEVEN.



THE
RESULT
WAS ME.

PUT HIS
HANDS ON
ANOTHER
WOMAN AND
GOT HER
PREGNANT.

A MAN WHO
ALREADY HAD
A WIFE AND
CHILD...



MY FATHER,
STEPMOTHER,
AND ELDER
BROTHERS
DIDN'T
WELCOME
ME.

MY MOTHER
JUST COULDN'T
BRING HERSELF
TO LOVE ME,
SO SHE LEFT ME
WITH MY FATHER
IN AKEIWA, AND
DISAPPEARED.



THE ONLY
THING THAT
FELT OPEN
THERE WAS THE
LANDSCAPE.



THAT
PLACE WAS
SUFFOCATING.



I FOUND OUT
ABOUT A GIRL
NAMED IZANA,
WHO LIVED A
DOWNTRODDEN
LIFE, LIKE ME.





AND
RAISED
HER IN
SECRET.

BUT
AN OLD
WOMAN
NAMED
CHIGUSA
HIRASAKA
HAD
SHELTERED
HER,

THEY'D
MEANT TO
KILL HER
SOON
AFTER HER
BIRTH.

SHE TOLD
ME THAT
BECAUSE
OF OUT-
DATED
CUSTOMS,



DON'T
STARE
AT ME.

WHAT'S
MORE...



BUT
...

THAT
FACE...
WAS JUST
LIKE A
MONSTER!



S-
SOR-
RY!



HER
DESPAIR

...

I WAS
BORN UN-
WANTED,

FORCED
TO LIVE
AS AN
OUTCAST
IN MY
FAMILY.

WE'RE
JUST
THE
SAME.

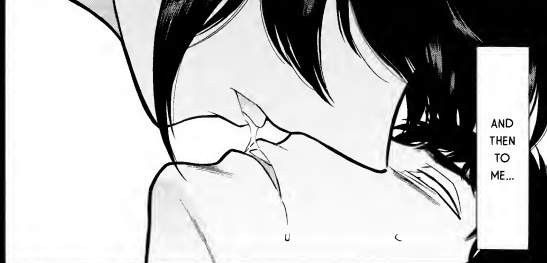
WAS
ONE DAY
REVERSED.

AND
CARVED
OUT
HER
OWN
FATE!

SHE
BURNED
IT ALL
TO THE
GROUND

...

WHEN SHE
ACQUIRED
THE POWER
OF THAT
LIPSTICK,
SHE WAS
SUBLIMELY
REBORN.

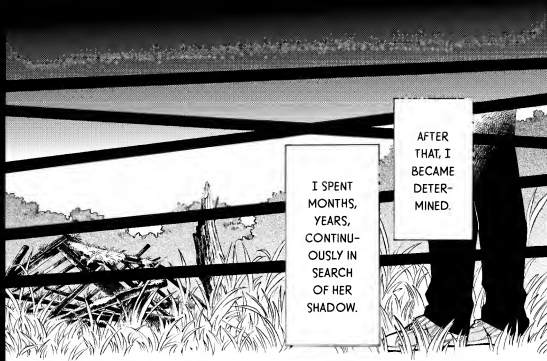


AND
THEN
TO
ME...



AND
THEN
DISAP-
PEARED.

SHE LEFT
ONLY A
HOT, SOFT
SEAL ON
MY LIPS...



I SPENT
MONTHS,
YEARS,
CONTINU-
OUSLY IN
SEARCH
OF HER
SHADOW.

AFTER
THAT, I
BECAME
DETER-
MINED.



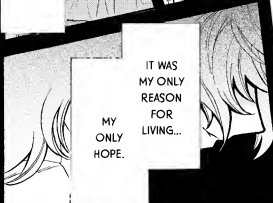
WHERE
MIGHT
SHE
GO?

WHERE
DID
SHE
GO?



WHILE AT
NIGHT, I
DREAMED
OF THAT
KISS.

I
SEARCHED
FOR YOU
IN THE
CROWDS,



MY
ONLY
HOPE.

IT WAS
MY ONLY
REASON
FOR
LIVING...



SHE'LL
NEVER
COME
BACK
TO OUR
HOMETOWN
AGAIN...
WILL
SHE?

NOTHING
ELSE...

COULD
EVER
QUENCH
MY THIRST
OR MY
HEART.

I WAS
PARCHED...

I WAS
STARVING.



AND
WHEN I
FINALLY
FOUND
HER...



I DID
SOME-
THING
TO HER
THAT
COULDN'T
BE
UNDONE.

KINGO
...!



FROM
THAT DAY
FORWARD,
I BECAME...

YES

...



EVENTU-
ALLY...

NOTHING
MORE
THAN YOUR
SLAVE.





HOW
WAS
IT?

IZANA CAME
TO REIGN IN
THE WORLD
OF THEATER AS
SUKEYO FUCHI.



HE'LL
PROBABLY
PROPOSE
TO YOU.



AND
HE'S NOT
CHEATING.
UM...IN
OTHER
WORDS...



OH...
YEAH.

I
SEE.



IT
LOOKS
LIKE
ATAE
KAIDOU
WASN'T
ACTUALLY
SUSPI-
CIOUS
OF YOU.



GOOD
JOB
WITH
THE
INVESTI-
GATION.



PANT

PANT

IS BECAUSE
CHIGUSA
HIRASAKA
ONCE
CARED
DEEPLY
FOR YOU.

THE
REASON
I DON'T
KILL
YOU...

YOUR
USUAL
REWARD.

TO ME,
YOU'RE
AKEIWA
ITSELF,

KINGO.

IN
TRUTH,
I'D
RATHER
NOT
SEE
YOUR
FACE
...
OR
BREATHE
THE
SAME
AIR AS
YOU.



YOU JUST
WANT YOUR
REWARDS.



THAT'S
NOT
IT!

I'M
DONE
WITH
YOU.
GET
OUT.



BUT...
STILL
...

IF I
CAN BE
USEFUL
TO YOU
...



CLICK



BUT
STILL...

TAP



THAT'S
ABSO-
LUTELY
IT.

I'M
A DIS-
GRACE...
SHIT.



NOT
WHAT?

WAS THE
GREATEST
THRILL
TO ME.

AND
THAT'S
WHY
...

I...

AFTER
BEING
DENIED
EVEN THE
OPPOR-
TUNITY TO
LIVE...

SEEING
YOU REBEL
AGAINST
YOUR FATE,
ILLUMINATED
MORE
BEAUTIFULLY
THAN
ANYONE,

AND NOT
LIKE I DO
RIGHT NOW...
I WANT YOU
TO NEED ME.

I WANT
YOU TO
FORGIVE
ME.

I WANT
TO LIVE
FOR YOU,

WHATEVER
ELSE I MIGHT
HURT...AS LONG
AS IT'S FOR
THAT SAKE!

I DON'T
CARE...



BUT THEN
THE TIME
CAME FOR
EVERYTHING
TO COME
CRASHING
DOWN.

BUT BY
THEN, YOU'D
BEEN REDUCED
TO SOMETHING
SO SMALL AND
FRAGILE.

YOU'D
FINALLY
COME
TO NEED
ME...

PLEASE
...

KINGO,

WILL
YOU
LISTEN
TO MY
WISH?

SHE
WASN'T
TRYING
TO GIVE
ME AN
ORDER.
IT WAS
POIGNANT;
A REQUEST.

THIS
WILL
BE...

MY
FINAL
RE-
QUEST.



SO...
LEAD
MY
DAUGH-
TER...

OUT
FROM
THE
ABYSS,
AND
INTO
THE
WHITE
LIGHTS.

YES
...

IF YOU
DO THIS,
I'LL
FORGET
ALL MY RESENT-
MENT
AND
BLOOD
TOWARD
YOU.



IF I
GRANT
YOUR
WISH,

WILL
YOU
FORGIVE
ME?



THUMP

GUIDE
HER!

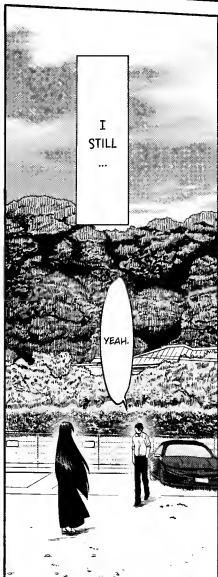
THE
WEATHER'S
CLEARED.



SHE'S A
SENSITIVE
GIRL, SO
DON'T
SCARE
HER.



HAVE
YET
TO BE
FOR-
GIVEN.



I
STILL
...

YEAH.



SUR-
PRISED?

I'M SURE
YOU'LL BE
SURPRISED,
HABUTA-
SAN.

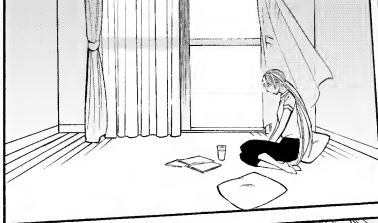
RATTLE
RATTLE



LET ME
INTRODUCE
YOU...

YES.

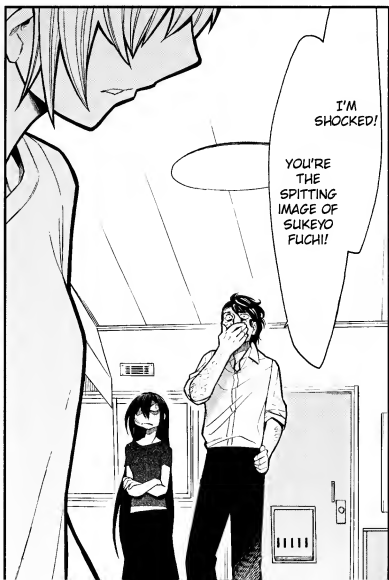
GA-CHAK



Chapter Fifty-Seven: the end

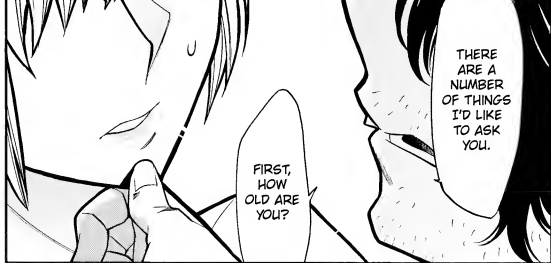
Chapter Fifty-Eight:
Rainbow

















DON'T
YOU
UNDER-
ESTIMATE
ME.



...



AND THAT
OBSESSION
IS PROBABLY
THE REAL
DEAL.

THAT
LOOK
IN HER
EYES,



THE
PARTS OF
NOGIKU
THAT ARE
CONVENIENT
TO HER.

BUT
SHE
ONLY
WANTS
TO
SEE...



I
HOPE
SO.

YOU
TRUST
HER
TOO
MUCH.



I
JUST
DON'T
WANT
TO LET
THIS
ONE
GET
AWAY.





EVEN AS
SHE'S
APOLOGIZ-
ING...

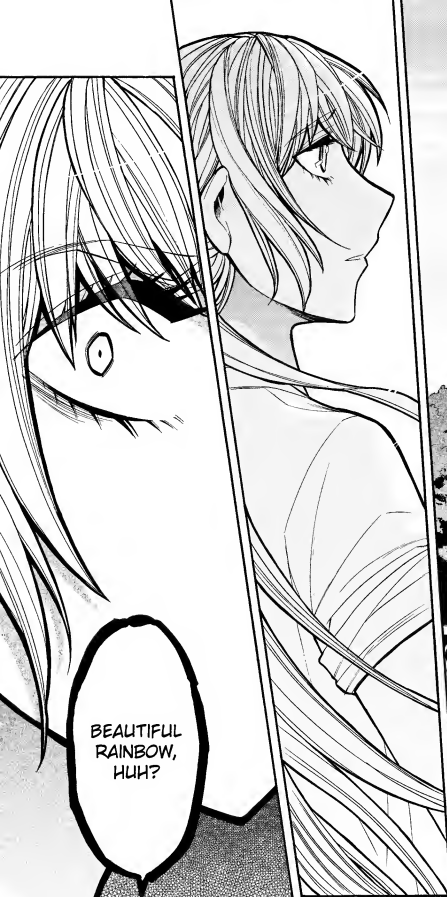
JUST
HOW
MANY
LIES HAS
SHE BEEN
TELLING
ME?

AND THAT
HABUTA
MAN IS AN
UNKNOWN
FACTOR.

AND...
I'VE
BEEN
LYING
ALL
THIS
TIME,
TOO...

AH
...

CLENCH



BEAUTIFUL
RAINBOW,
HUH?





PEOPLE
TEND TO SEE
RAINBOWS
AS A LUCKY
SIGN,

BUT
A LONG
TIME AGO,
A CERTAIN
SCHOLAR
ONCE
TOLD
ME...

THAT IN
ANCIENT
TIMES,
THEY
WERE
FEARED
AS ILL
OMENS.



IF
YOU'RE
GOOD
LUCK OR
BAD?

LET'S
HAVE
YOU
DIVINE
...

NOW
THEN,

...



ABOUT
WHO YOU
ARE.

I MEAN,
YOU'D
RATHER
KASANE
NOT
HEAR,
RIGHT?

SOR-
RY.

WERE
YOU
FOL-
LOW-
ING
ME?





SO
SHE DID
SHOW UP
KNOWING
KASANE
IS HER
SISTER.

I WAS
TOLD
THAT
YOU'D
DIED AS
A BABY.



WHO
ARE
YOU?

IT'S
JUST AS
IF SHE'S
ACTUALLY
COME
BACK.

IF YOU
KNOW
ABOUT
ME, THAT
MEANS
YOU HAD
SOME
CONNEC-
TION TO
THEM.

TO MY
FATHER?
OR...



HUH?



FRANKLY,
THERE ARE
A LOT OF
THINGS I'D
LIKE TO ASK
YOU.





IT'S
TRUE
THAT I
WANT TO
GET RID
OF MY
IDENTITY.

HMPH.



WANTED
TO MEET
KASANE
...

AND
HELP
HER
OUT.



WHATEVER YOUR
INTENTIONS ARE,
YOU'RE GONNA
BE COOPERATING
WITH US.



LIKE-
WISE.

JUST
...

SO
WE'LL
BE
COUNT-
ING ON
YOU.



I WOULD
LIKE YOU
TO REFRAIN
FROM THIS
CRUDE
BEHAVIOR,
TAILING ME
LIKE THAT.

FROM
NOW
ON,



SEE YA,
LITTLE
SISTER.



I
GOT
THAT.

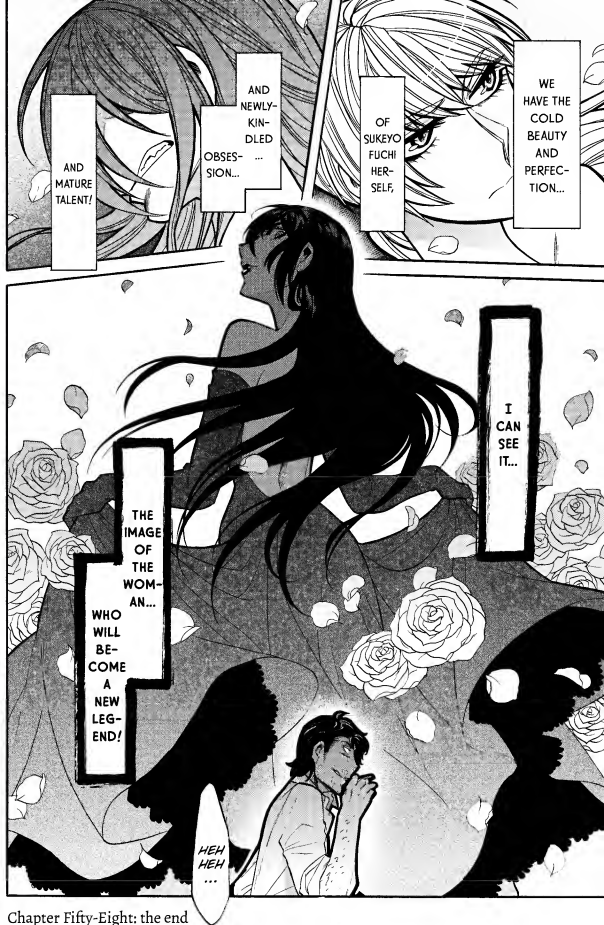
HEH!
YEAH,
IT WAS
RUDE
OF ME.



ACTUALLY,
I SHOULD
BE LOOKING
AT THIS AS
THE MOST
FORTUNATE
EVENT
YET.
SEEING
AS...

SO THE
RAINBOW
IS AN ILL
OMEN.
BLOOD
BRINGS
MISFOR-
TUNE...
OR NO...

SHE'S
GOT TO BE
THINKING
SOMETHING
NASTY,
AFTER
ALL.



AND
MATURE
TALENT!

AND
NEWLY-
KIN-
DLED
OBSES-
SION...

OF
SUKEYO
FUCHI
HER-
SELF,

WE
HAVE THE
COLD
BEAUTY
AND
PERFEC-
TION...

I
CAN
SEE
IT...

THE
IMAGE
OF
THE
WOM-
AN...

WHO
WILL
BE-
COME
A
NEW
LEG-
END!

HEH
HEH
...

MURMUR

IS SHE
REALLY A
NEWBIE?

MURMUR

WELL,
EVERY-
ONE'S
TALKING
ABOUT
THAT NEW
ACTRESS,
YOU
KNOW?

HEY,
WHAT
ARE YOUR
THOUGHTS
ON
THEATER
THESE
DAYS?

MURMUR

MURMUR

AND
SHE'S
ABSO-
LUTELY
GORGEOUS,
TO BOOT.
AND
FOR
SOME
REASON,
SHE WON'T
REVEAL HER
CAREER
HISTORY
OR FAMILY
BACK-
GROUND.

MURMUR

I JUST
CAN'T
BELIEVE
IT... SHE'S
AS GOOD
AS THE
VETERANS.

THAT'S
WHAT
THEY
SAY.

MURMUR

DON'T
YOU THINK
SHE'S A
LITTLE
LIKE NEENA
TANZAWA?

NO,
NOT
HER.





SOME-
ONE
THAT BIG...
IS LIKE
SUKEYO
FUCHI.

...

Chapter Fifty-Nine: Bloom





WE NEED TO MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE YOU CAME FROM NOTHING, WHILE ALSO MAKING A STRIKING DEBUT.

FIVE MONTHS EARLIER
...

FIRST THINGS FIRST: YOU NEED TO MOVE OUT OF THIS OLD SHACK IN THE STICKS.



OR LIVE CLOSE, AND VISIT?

ARE YOU TWO GONNA LIVE TOGETHER,



THAT RE-MINDS ME...

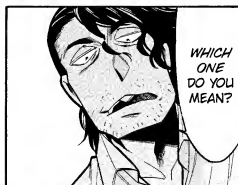
I'M LOOKING FOR A PLACE IN THE CITY.
NEENA'S APARTMENT WAS TINY, SO I'M THINKING OF A PLACE THAT'S A LITTLE BIGGER.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHERE DO WE LIVE?

WE CAN DECIDE THAT BASED ON NOGIKU'S CIRCUMSTANCES.



I WONDER
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO THAT
MANSION?

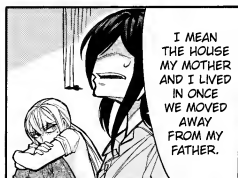


WHICH
ONE
DO YOU
MEAN?



OH.

WHICH
ONE?



I MEAN
THE HOUSE
MY MOTHER
AND I LIVED
IN ONCE
WE MOVED
AWAY
FROM MY
FATHER.



...

BY
MAN-
SION
...

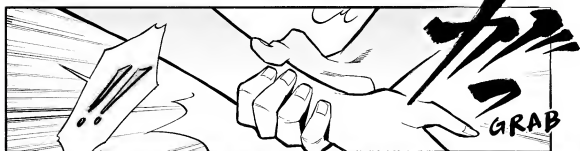




WELL,
THOUGH
IT'S TRUE
THAT I
DON'T KNOW
WHAT'S
HAPPENED
TO MY
FATHER'S
MANSION...



I'LL
GIVE YOU
A RIDE
TO THE
STATION.





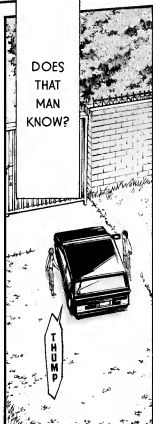
JUST
HOW
MUCH
...



WE'LL
OPEN
THE REAR
GATE AND
GET IN
THROUGH
A WIN-
DOW.

YEP.

ARE
YOU
THE ONE
WHO
LOCKED
THIS
GATE?



DOES
THAT
MAN
KNOW?

T H U M P



HE
MAY
HAVE
BEEN IN
AND OUT
OF HERE
ANY
NUMBER
OF
TIMES.

HE
KNOWS
THE
LAYOUT
OF THE
BUILD-
ING.



I DID
...
GET
RID OF
THE BODY
AND THE
MURDER
WEAPON,
JUST IN
CASE.

BUT
GETTING
THE
STAINS OUT
WASN'T
GONNA
HAPPEN,
AS YOU
MIGHT
EXPECT.



AND
THEN ATAE'S
"DAUGHTER,"
WHO SHOULD
HAVE DIED, SHOWS
UP AT JUST THE
SAME TIME...

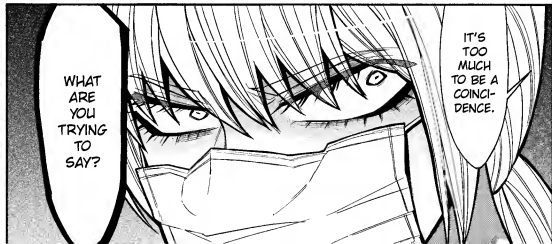
ALL YOU
COULD TELL
WAS THAT
HE'D BEEN
LIVING HERE
WITH A
WOMAN.

THERE
WAS A
BODY,
BUT NO
SIGN OF
THEFT.

AT
FIRST,

WHAT
ARE
YOU
TRYING
TO
SAY?

IT'S
TOO
MUCH
TO BE A
COINCIDENCE.







ARE
STAINED
WITH
THE
IMPURE
MARKS
...



AND
THESE
CLOTHES
...

THIS,

ハ
サ
RUSTLE
ハ
サ
ハ
サ
RUSTLE

AND
THIS
DRESS,

HEY,
WHAT'RE
YOU
DOING?



WHERE
I WAS
CALLED
BY A NAME
OTHER
THAN
NOGIKU.

THOSE
WERE ALL
SUKEYO-
SAN'S
CLOTHES.

OF THOSE
FILTHY
MEMORIES
...



DON'T
YOU DARE
TOUCH MY
PAST.



LEAVE
ME
ALONE.



HEY,
WHERE
ARE YOU
GOING?



I
DON'T
WANT
ANY-
ONE
TO
TOUCH
IT.



I
DON'T
WANT
ANY-
ONE
TO
SEE IT.



THERE'S
STILL...
MORE
IN THIS
MANSION
...



DRESS-
ES,



PER-
FUMES,



RINGS
...



YES
...









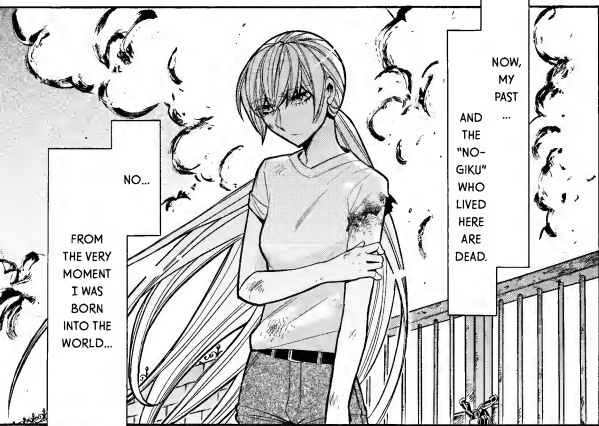
NOBODY
HAS TO
KNOW

...
NOT
YOU,
OR
KASANE.



NOW,
MY
PAST

...
AND
THE
"NO-
GIKU"
WHO
LIVED
HERE
ARE
DEAD.



NO...

FROM
THE VERY
MOMENT
I WAS
BORN
INTO THE
WORLD...





...

YOU'RE
BEAUTI-
FUL.



A LOT
LIKE MY
FATHER,
YOUR-
SELF.

YOU'RE
...



DON'T
COMPARE
ME TO
THAT
PIECE OF
SHIT.

I'LL
GET
PRETTY
PISSED.



HMPH.



DYING
BY FIRE,
BORN IN
FIRE...

JUST
LIKE
HER.



WELL,

IT'S
NOT
REALLY
YOU
BEING
BORN
WITH
THIS
FIRE.

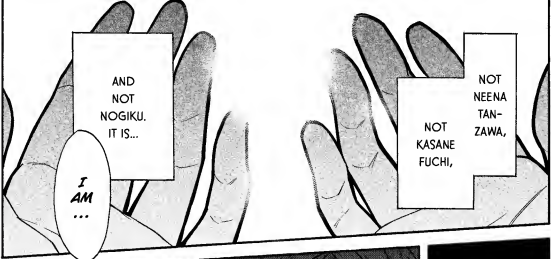
COMPARED
TO HER
FIRE,
YOU'RE
NOTHING
MORE
THAN AN
OFFERING.

...

THAT'S
RIGHT.

WAS NO
ONE. A NEW
MONSTER.

WHAT
WAS
BORN
...



AND
NOT
NOGIKU.
IT IS...

*I
AM
...*

NOT
NEENA
TAN-
ZAWA,

NOT
KASANE
FUCHI,



THE
RED
FLAME
THAT
BLOS-
SOMS
...

FROM
EMPTY
DARK-
NESS
INTO
SUDDEN
GLORY.



*I AM
SAKI.**

*SAKI IS WRITTEN WITH THE CHARACTERS FOR "BLOOM" AND "CRIMSON."

Chapter Fifty-Nine:
the end



GET
RID OF
EVERY
HABIT
YOU'VE
EVER
HAD.

AND I'M
NOT JUST
TALKING ABOUT
YOUR ACTING
PERFORMANCES.
I MEAN YOUR
REGULAR
BEHAVIOR, AND
EVEN YOUR
PERSONALITY.

NEENA
TANZAWA
IS DEAD.

FLASH

ALL
YOU ARE
...

YOUR
PAST
DOESN'T
EXIST.

YOUR
NAME IS
SAKI.



YOU'RE
A QUEEN
AMONG
WOMEN.

IS
PERFECT
TALENT
AND
BEAUTY
...

AND
SINGLE-
MINDED
OBSES-
SION.



...

EVERY-
THING
AROUND
ME...

IT'S
NOT
JUST
HIM.

NO,

COMPARED
TO BEFORE.

HABUTA
TREATS ME
A LITTLE
DIFFERENTLY
NOW...



HAS BEEN
SO CLEARLY
DIFFERENT
FROM THE
TIME I WAS
NEENA
TANZAWA.



IT LOOKS
LIKE
REHEARSALS
WILL
BE GOING
ON EXTRA-
LONG
TODAY.

IT REALLY
HELPS ME
WHEN
YOU COME
LIKE
THIS.

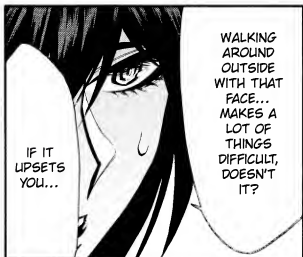


SINCE
NOGIKU'S NOT
IN A COMA AND
DOESN'T HAVE
THAT SLEEPING
SICKNESS LIKE
NEENA DID...





I HARDLY
HAVE TO
WORRY
ABOUT...
THE TIME
LIMIT
ON THE
LIPSTICK'S
EFFECTS.

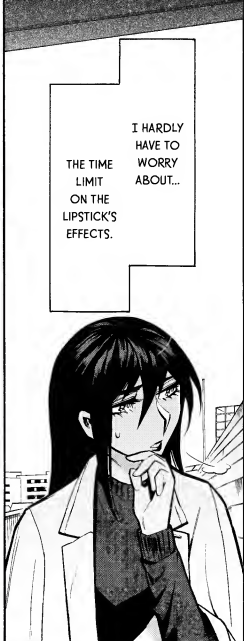


IF IT
UPSETS
YOU...

WALKING
AROUND
OUTSIDE
WITH THAT
FACE...
MAKES A
LOT OF
THINGS
DIFFICULT,
DOESN'T
IT?



NOT
REALLY.



OR...

IS SHE
JUST NOT
SAYING
SO, TO
BE NICE?

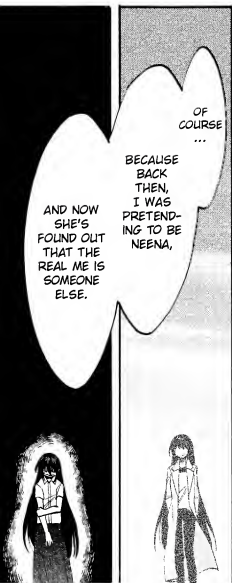
PEOPLE
SHOULD
BE STARING
AT HER AND
LAUGHING
AT HER...

THERE'S
NO WAY IT
COULD BE
NOTHING
TO HER.

NO
WAY.

OH...





AND NOW
SHE'S
FOUND OUT
THAT THE
REAL ME IS
SOMEONE
ELSE.

OF
COURSE
...

BECAUSE
BACK
THEN,
I WAS
PRETEND-
ING TO BE
NEENA,



BUT
THERE WAS
SOMETHING
I STILL
COULDN'T
GET BACK.



BUT THE
MORE
UNPLEASANT
I FIND
THOSE
CHANGES,
SOMEHOW...

AND
NOT
JUST
NO-
GIKU.
IF I
WERE
TO SEE
UNO-
SAN
NOW...

IT'S
CHANGED
OUR
RELATION-
SHIP.

THE MORE
HONED AND
FOCUSED MY
EXPRESSION
BECOMES
ON STAGE.







WE CAN
KEEP MY
BACK-
GROUND
HIDDEN,
THIS WAY,
TOO.

I
GUESS IT
WAS THE
RIGHT
CHOICE TO
CREATE AN
AGENCY,
EVEN IF
IT'S JUST A
TEM-
PORARY
THING.

IT'S
EASY TO
MEET YOU
OPENLY,
AS A
"COLLEAGUE."



ABOUT
"WHERE
THE HELL I
FOUND AN
ACTRESS
LIKE THAT."

THOUGH
PEOPLE
DO KEEP
HOUNDING
ME...



SINCE
YOUR
SHTICK IS
BEING THE
ENIGMATIC,
GENIUS
ACTRESS
WHO
LOOKS
JUST LIKE
SUKEYO
FUCHI.

SAKI,

YOUR
DEBUT
HAS TO
HAVE
LEFT AN
IMPACT-

...

MORE IM-
PORTANTLY,
JUST TELL
ME WHAT
YOU CAME
HERE FOR.



BUT
NOW
THIS IS
WHERE
I WANT
YOU TO
TRY YOUR
LUCK—

LIKE
PERHAPS
STARRING
IN A PRO-
DUCTION
THAT EVEN
NEENA
TANZAWA
HASN'T YET
TRIED OUT.

AND
YOUR
REPUTA-
TION AND
FAME IS
ON THE
RISE.

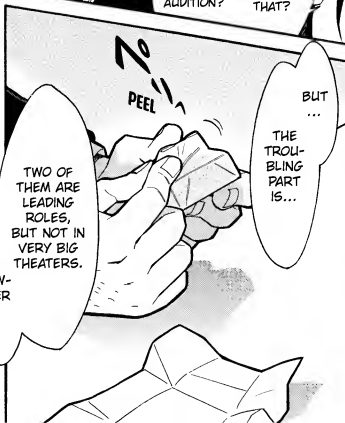
THOUGH
YOU MAY
BE NEW
TO THE
BUSI-
NESS,

YOU'VE
GOT THE
EYES OF
STAGE
VETERANS
AND FANS
GATHERED
ON YOU
NOW,



OR
ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT AN
AUDITION?

DO I
HAVE ANY
OFFERS
LIKE
THAT?



PEEL

TWO OF
THEM ARE
LEADING
ROLES,
BUT NOT IN
VERY BIG
THEATERS.

HOW-
EVER
...

BUT
...
THE TROU-
BLING
PART IS...



THANK-
FULLY,
YOU HAVE
THREE
OFFERS.



YOSHIO
FUJI-
HARA
?!

THAT'S
AMAZ-
ING!

THE
THIRD
ONE...
IS A
LEADING
ROLE...

AND
ALSO A
FERVENT
REQUEST
FROM THE
WORLD-
CLASS
DIRECTOR,
YOSHIO
FUJIHARA.



BUT HE'LL
BE GOING
AROUND TO
PERFORM
IN THEATERS
ALL OVER
THE
COUNTRY.

THAT'S
RIGHT.

PLUS...
HE'S
WORKED
WITH MY
MOTHER A
NUMBER
OF TIMES.

HE JUST
WON BEST
DIRECTOR
IN FRANCE!



THE
SCRIPT
ISN'T A
LUCKY
ONE.

YEAH,
BUT
...

WHAT
?

NOW I
CAN TAKE
NOGIKU
WITH ME,
SO THAT
WON'T BE A
PROBLEM.

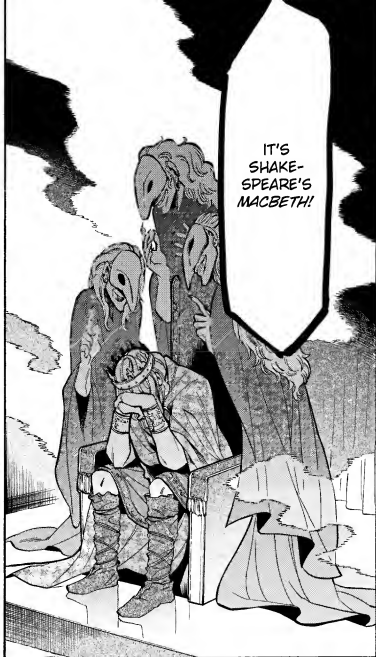


MAC-
BETH

...

SO
LADY
MAC-
BETH,
HUH?

THAT'S
RIGHT.



IT'S
SHAKE-
SPEARE'S
MACBETH!



AND...

MY
MOTHER'S
FINAL
ROLE...

THE
CRUEL
QUEEN
WHO
BACKS
ALL
SORTS
OF
MURDERS
...

SO THAT
HER
HUSBAND
MAY
TAKE THE
THRONE.



AFTER
THAT
SHOW,
SHE NEVER
STOOD
ON STAGE
AGAIN.

THE
CURTAINS
FELL
AMONG
WILD
ACCOLADES,
AND IT
ALL SEEMED
LIKE A
SMOOTHLY-
RUN
PERFORMANCE
FROM
HER...

WHILE
IT MAY
HAVE
SEEMED
TO ANYONE
ELSE THAT
IT WAS A
POLISHED
PERFORM-
ANCE
TYPICAL OF
SUKEYO
FUCHI,



...

AFTER
MACBETH,
HER FATE
WENT
AWRY.



ARE
YOU
SAYING
...

SO I
WANT
YOU TO
AVOID
THAT
ROLE AS
MUCH AS
POSSI-
BLE.



YES...
IT'S AN
INLAUS-
PICIOUS
CHOICE.



THAT I'LL
FOLLOW
THE SAME
FATE AS MY
MOTHER?





I'D END THE SAME WAY AS MY MOTHER?

I'D "LET THINGS SLIP"?

I'D
"LET
THINGS
SLIP"?

I
DIDN'T
COME
BACK
TO THE
STAGE
...

TO BACK
DOWN SO
EASILY!

TO BACK
DOWN SO
EASILY!

YOU
REALLY
UNDER-
ESTIMATE
ME,
DON'T
YOU?

EEEEEE

AND
ANYWAY...
I'M NOT
NEENA
TANZAWA
OR SUKEYO
FUCHI.

EEEEEE

AND
ANYWAY...
I'M NOT
NEENA
TANZAWA
OR SUKEYO
FUCHI.



A large, high-contrast black and white close-up of a man's face. He has dark, wavy hair and a serious expression. A hand is pressed against his mouth, with fingers spread. The background is dark and indistinct.

STOP
SEEING
DEAD
WOMEN
IN MY
FACE.

...HEH.



A black and white action scene. A man in a dark trench coat is lunging forward, grabbing the arm of a woman with long dark hair. The woman has a surprised or concerned expression. The background is simple, with some geometric shapes suggesting an interior setting.

SO
THEN
WHO
ARE
YOU?

GRAB



YOU'RE
THE ONE
WHO CAME
UP WITH
THAT!

A
WOMAN
WITH NO
PAST.

I'M
SAKI.



I'M
TAKING
THE
MACBETH
ROLE!

**バカ
JERK**



YOU'RE
SAYING
YOU'LL
SURPASS
YOUR
MOTHER?

I HAVE TO
DISCONNECT
FROM MY
MOTHER...AND
MY PAST
AS NEENA
TANZAWA.

I'LL SURPASS
MACBETH,
THE PLAY
THAT THREW
MY MOTHER'S
FATE INTO
DISARRAY.

YES
...

I AM.



BRING
IT ON.

LADY
MAC-
BETH,
THE
PLAY
THAT
PULLED
THE
TRIG-
GER
ON MY
MOTH-
ER'S
DOWN-
FALL...

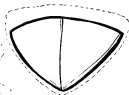
Chapter Sixty:
the end

KASANE

SPECIAL EXTRA

KASANE
FUCHI'S
SCAR

KINGO HABUTA'S
FRONT TEETH

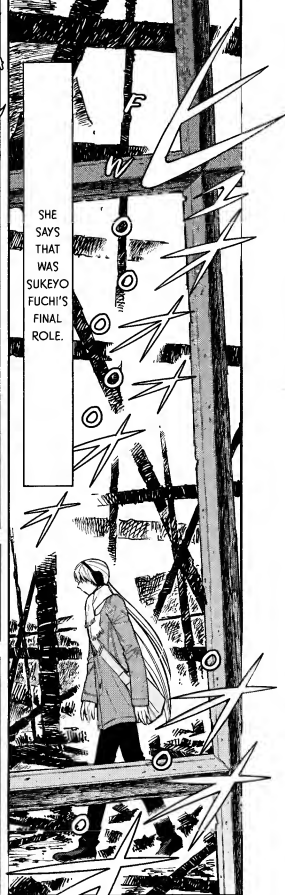


Chapter Sixty-One: Burnt Skin

SAKI
HAS
FINALLY
...

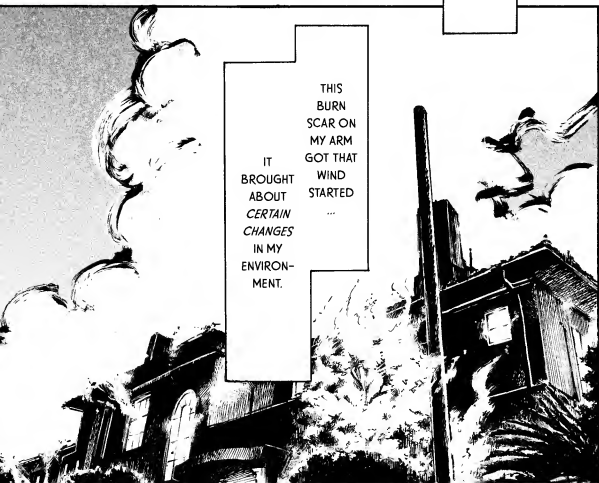
ACQUIRED
A TICKET
TO A
PRODUCTION
SO BIG,
SHE MIGHT
REACH
IZANA'S
HEIGHTS.







THE
WIND
AT MY
BACK
PUSHES
ME.



IT
BROUGHT
ABOUT
CERTAIN
CHANGES
IN MY
ENVIRON-
MENT.

THIS
BURN
SCAR ON
MY ARM
GOT THAT
WIND
STARTED
...





I'M
GETTING
CHANGED
RIGHT
NOW, SO
I WON'T
MAKE A
MESS
IN YOUR
APART-
MENT.



WHA
...



WHAT...
IS
THIS?



HUH
?



HAVE
YOU
RUN
COLD
WATER
ON IT?

DO IT,
RIGHT
NOW!

UN-
DER
THE
TAP!

NO.



IT
DOES
MAT-
TER!

A
BURN
LIKE
THIS
DOESN'T
MAT-
TER-

WHAT?

I'M
TELLING
YOU TO
LEAVE ME
ALONE!



OH...
I
MEAN
...



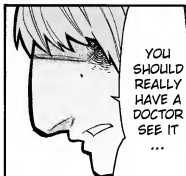
YOU,
TOO,
HUH?

WHAT
IF YOU
SCAR
YOUR
FACE?!



THAT'S
NOT IT.

YOU DON'T
WANT ANY
SCARS ON
YOUR KEPT
WOMAN.







YOU
JUST
GO TO
SLEEP.

I REMEM-
BERED
I STILL
HAVE SOME
WORK
TO DO.

AND
THE
CHANGES
WEREN'T
LIMITED
TO
NIGHT-
TIME.

AFTER THAT,
AMAGASAKI
STOPPED
HAVING SEX
WITH ME.

IT SEEMED
LIKE HE WAS
KEEPING AWAY
FROM ME,
TRYING TO
AVOID EVEN
LOOKING ME
IN THE EYE.





NO-
GIKU-
SAN.



PLEASE
MOVE
OUT OF
HERE.



IF POSSIBLE,
TOMORROW...
BEFORE I
GET HOME.



WAS IT
SEEING
THE BURN
THAT
STARTED
MAKING
HIM ACT
SO ODD?
BUT
WHY...?

AND
THEN

...



YOU'RE
DONE
WITH ME
THE
MOMENT
I'M
DAMAGED
GOODS,
AFTER
ALL....
ISN'T
THAT
RIGHT?

SO...



HAVE
YOU HERE
ANY-
MORE.

I JUST
FELT LIKE
I DON'T
WANT TO
...

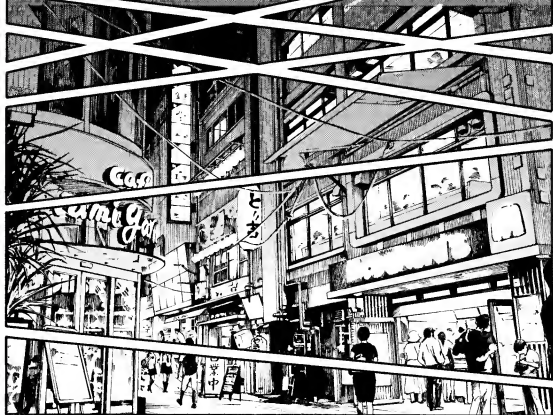


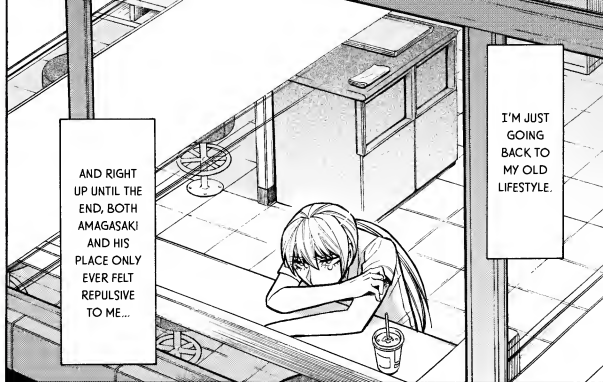
FINE.



SINCE A
LOT OF IT
INCLUDES
THINGS ABOUT
MYSELF I
CAN'T HAVE
GETTING OUT,
ANYWAY.

OF COURSE, I
WON'T SHARE
ANYTHING I
KNOW ABOUT
YOU WITH
ANYONE...





AND RIGHT
UP UNTIL THE
END, BOTH
AMAGASAKI
AND HIS
PLACE ONLY
EVER FELT
REPULSIVE
TO ME...

I'M JUST
GOING
BACK TO
MY OLD
LIFESTYLE.



SO WHY
DOES THIS
FEEL SO
FRUSTRAT-
ING?



I'M
BOUGHT,
ABANDONED,
THEN
OFFERED
OUT AGAIN
FOR
PURCHASE.

I'M JUST
LIKE A TOY,
TO BE
USED AND
DISCARDED.

LIKE A
THING,



NOTHING
HAS
CHANGED
SINCE THE
TIME MY
FATHER WAS
SLEEPING
WITH ME...

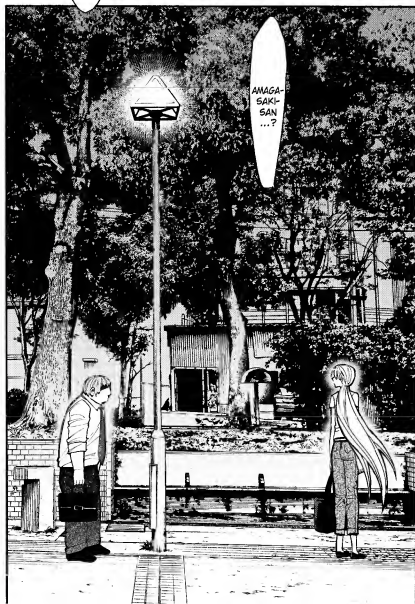
I'M
STILL...

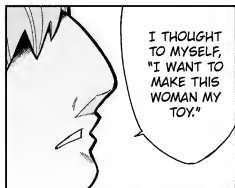
STUCK
INSIDE A
MANSION
THAT
SHOULD
BE
LONG-
BURNT.

THERE'S
JUST
ONE
WAY...

TO
FREE
MY
SOUL.

JUST
ONE...AND
THAT'S
KASANE'S
RUIN.





I THOUGHT
TO MYSELF,
"I WANT TO
MAKE THIS
WOMAN MY
TOY."



I WANTED TO
KEEP BREAK-
ING YOU EVERY
NIGHT LIKE A
MANUFACTURED
DOLL, OBSERVING
UNTIL YOU WERE
BROKEN.



YOU
WERE
GLARING
AT ME
LIKE
THAT
WHEN
WE
FIRST
MET,
TOO.

YOU
WERE SO
BEAU-
TIFUL, I
COULDN'T
LOOK
AWAY.







AND
EVEN
NOW

...

MY OWN
STUDENTS
MAKE ME
THE BUTT
OF RIDICULE,
DAY AFTER
DAY.



THEY
BURNED
ME WITH
A LIGHTER,
SLOWLY.
THIS IS
THAT
SCAR.

THAT'S
WHAT I
THOUGHT,
BUT...

FOR ME TO
TAKE JUST
ONE OF THOSE
PEOPLE WHO
LOOKED DOWN
ON ME TO
TORMENT AND
FUCK AND
BREAK.

SO I
FIGURED
IT WAS
FINE...



WHY'D
YOU HAVE
TO GET A
BURN
SCAR?



THE
MOMENT
YOU GOT A
SCAR LIKE
ME...



I
COULDN'T
SEE YOU
AS A THING
ANYMORE.



THROUGH
THAT
BURN...

I
STARTED
SEEING
YOU AS A
PERSON,
AND NOT
A DOLL.



WHAT
ARE
YOU
TALK-
ING
ABOUT
?

...



ALL OF IT
CAME TO
FEEL LIKE
SOMETHING
RAW AND
SICKENING.

SUD-
DENLY,
THE
WAY
YOU
LOOKED
AT
ME,

THE
WARMTH
AND
FEEL OF
YOUR
SKIN,

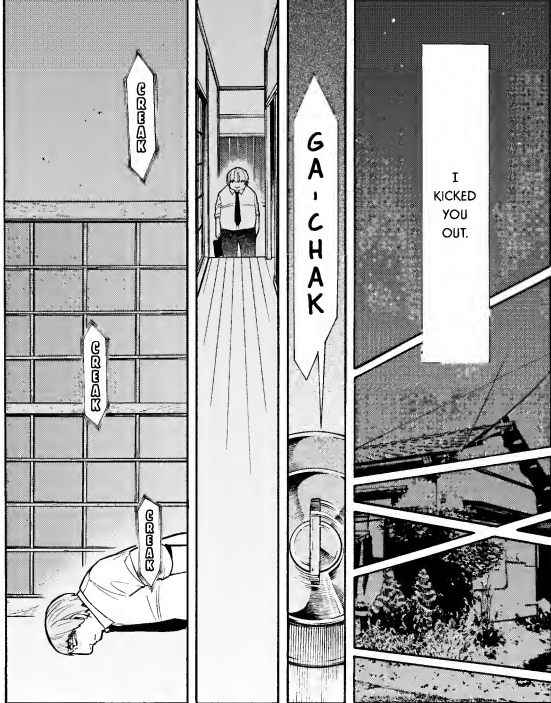


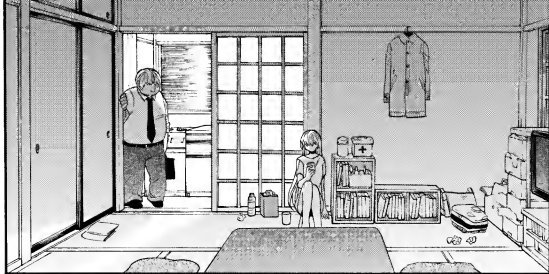
AND EVEN
IF I TRIED TO
AVERT MY
EYES FROM
THE SOURCE
...



IT
WAS
TOO
CLOSE
...

SO...









YOU
DON'T
HAVE TO
UNDER-
STAND.



I DON'T
REALLY
UNDER-
STAND

...

WHAT
YOU'RE
SAYING.



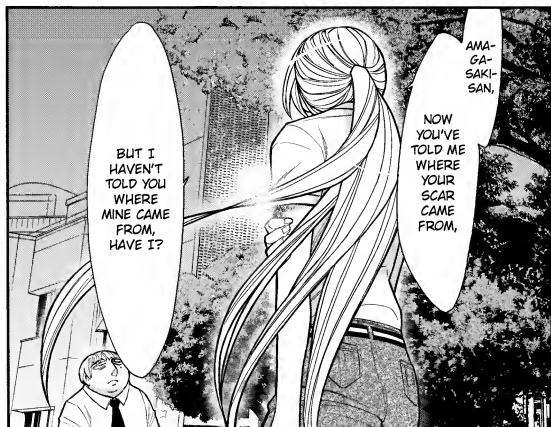
I JUST
COULDN'T
LEAVE YOU
ALONE
ANYMORE.

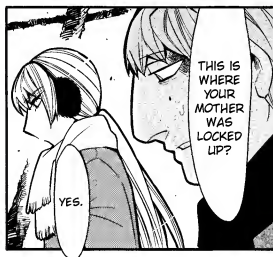
I'M
CONFUSED
MYSELF.



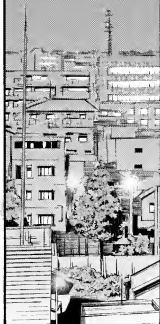
FWOOOOOSH!

...





I WANT YOU DECIDE
BASED
ON THAT
WHETHER
TO KEEP
ME IN YOUR
HOME OR
NOT.



AND
THIS
IS THE
PLACE
...

WHERE
I WAS
RAISED
IN
CONFINEMENT
FOR EIGH-
TEEN
YEARS
...

SPENDING MY
DAYS AS
NOTHING
BUT MY
FATHER'S
TOY.

I
KILLED
MY
FATHER,
AND
LEFT.

YES.

...
AND
YOU
BURNED
THIS
PLACE
DOWN?

AND
THIS
IS THE
PERSON
YOU WANT
TO LIVE
IN YOUR
HOME.







FUJIHARA
IS AN
INTENSE
MAN,



BUT
DON'T
BE TIMID
WITH
HIM.



BANQUO!
KEEP IN
MIND THE
FLOW
OF THE
WHOLE
SCENE!

Y-
YES,
SIR!



WITCHES!
ARE YOU
READING
THE STAGE
DIRECTIONS
CLOSELY?!



MAL-
COM!

YOU
DON'T
HAVE QUITE
ENOUGH
SENSE OF
DIGNITY,
AS THE
KING'S
SON.







HOWEVER
HE FEELS
ABOUT
NEENA
TANZAWA'S
DISAPPEAR-
ANCE,

OR
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO HIS
AFFECTION
FOR HER
...



THAT'S
ALL A
DISTRAC-
TION,
NOW.
DON'T
THINK
ABOUT
IT.



"AND
WHEN
GOES
HENCE?"

I
KNOW
THAT.



"MY
DEAR-
EST
LOVE,"

"DUN-
CAN
COMES
HERE
TO-
NIGHT."

YOU
AND HIM
ARE TOTAL
STRANGERS.
THIS IS
THE FIRST
TIME YOU'VE
MET.



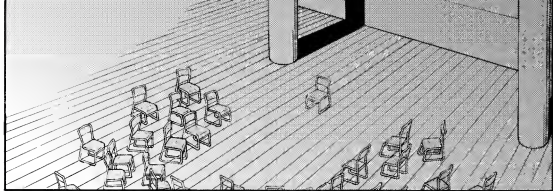
"WE
WILL
SPEAK
FUR-
THER."

BUT
BE THE
SERPENT
UNDER
'T."

"LOOK
LIKE
TH'
INNOCENT
FLOWER,
BUT
BE THE
SERPENT
UNDER
'T."

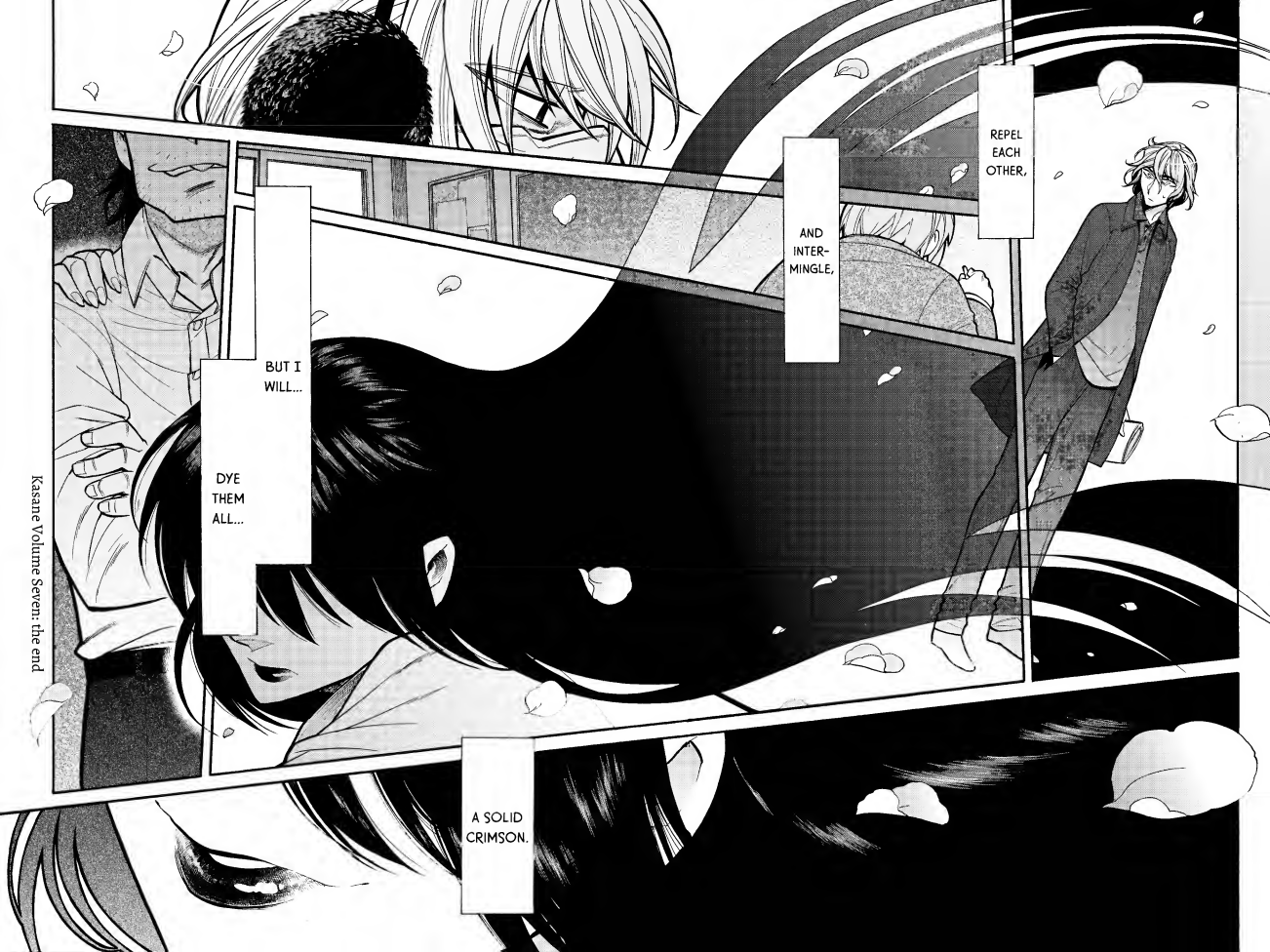
LOOK
LIKE
THE
TIME."

"TO
BE-
GUILE
THE
TIME,





INTER-
SECT,



REPEL
EACH
OTHER,

AND
INTER-
MINGLE,

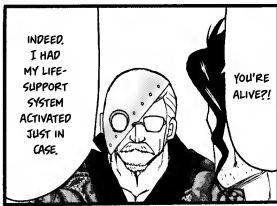
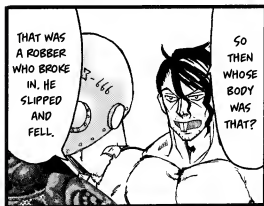
BUT I
WILL...

DYE
THEM
ALL...

A SOLID
CRIMSON.

HABUTA

Saburo Kirigakure



WITH THOSE WORDS, NOGIKU'S FATHER SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED.. WAS THAT REALLY A LIVING HUMAN?



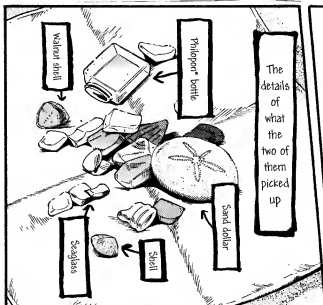
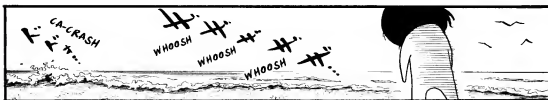
HABUTA-KUN, TAKE GOOD CARE OF MY DAUGHTER.

THAT WHACK OVER THE HEAD RE-FORMED ME.

A
DIGRESSION

LET'S PICK THINGS UP OFF THE BEACH!

Megamouth
shark



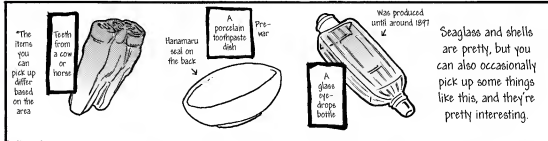
In volume 4 of
Kasane, Kasane
and Nogiku
gathered a
bunch of
things.



Hello.
This is Matsuura.
A lot of different
things wash up on
the beach, so it can
be fun to go pick
them up.



*Philopon was an old brand name Japanese methamphetamine.



OFFICE D STAFF

(HONORIFICS ABRIDGED)

- DOLMU KOBAYASHI
- SABURO KIRIGAKURE
- MASASHI MOTEGI
- SHIGOTO NORA
- SATOKO MATSUMOTO
- YUUTO YOKOYAMA
- SUBARU ENOMOTO

THANK YOU
SO MUCH, AS
ALWAYS!

*Marine creature illustrations by Saburo Kirigakure

THOUGH
THIS MAY
BE RATHER
SUDDEN, I'LL
INTRODUCE
TO YOU THE
STAFF WHO
HELPED
ME WITH
VOLUME 7.

AND THANK YOU SO MUCH TO ALL OF MY READERS!

PLEASE
STAY WITH US
FOR VOLUME
EIGHT!



Kasane 7

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English digital edition published by Kodansha Advanced Media, LLC,
San Francisco.

www.kodanshacomics.com

ISBN: 9781682339824

Digital Edition: 1.0.0

Translation by Jennifer Ward
Lettering by Jacqueline Wee
Editing by Dawne Law
YKS Services LLC/SKY Japan, INC.

